

RemarksAmendments to the Claims

The claims have been amended, as indicated above. The amendments to the indicated claims has been presented in accordance with the proposed revisions to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 as set forth in 1267 OG 106 (25 February 2003). No new matter has been introduced through the amending of the claims.

Objection to the Abstract

The abstract is objected to. The abstract has been amended to eliminate legal phraseology. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection.

Claim Objections

Claim 16 is objected to. Claim 16 has been cancelled. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection.

Specification Objections

Claims 17 and 20 are objected to. Claims 17 and 20 have been amended to eliminate an obvious informality. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1, 2, 8, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §102 (b) as being unpatentable over Nicol. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 10 has been added to claim 1, as suggested by the Examiner. Claim 16 has been added to claim 11, as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C §102 (b) as being unpatentable over Helterline et al. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 33 has been added to claim 27, as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Claims 27, 30 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §102 (b) as being unpatentable over Barbehenn et al. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 33 has been added to claim 27, as suggested by the Examiner. Also, due to the fact that the other dependent claims are dependent upon independent claim 27, the Applicants contend that these dependent claims are also allowable over the art of record. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Nicol in view of Shannon. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Due to the fact that these dependent claims are dependent upon independent claim 1, the Applicants contend that these dependent claims are also allowable over the art of record. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Claims 17, 22, 24, and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Barbehenn et al. in view of Anderson et al. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Due to the fact that these dependent claims are dependent upon independent claim 17, the Applicants contend that these dependent claims are also allowable over the art of record. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

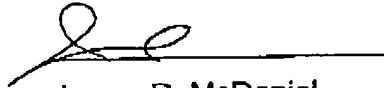
The Applicants acknowledge the objection of Claims 5-7, 9, 10, 12-16, 18-21, 23, 26, 28, 29, 31, and 33 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

The Applicants have reviewed the art of record cited in the Office Action, but not applied in the rejection. However, the Applicants contend that this

unapplied art does not anticipate and/or render obvious the claimed subject matter of the present invention.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that this case is in condition for allowance and now may be passed to issue forth with. A holding to this effect is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney during normal Mountain Time Zone business hours.

Respectfully submitted,
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